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Keep Awake!

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KEEP AWAKE!
A Liturgical Drama on Mark 13
A play for actors and singers by John Steven Paul
Developed in workshop by Soul Purpose,
The Liturgical Drama Troupe of the Valparaiso University Theatre

CHORUS

KEEP AWAKE!

MARK

A reading from Mark the 13th Chapter:

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down." When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birthpangs.

The Word of the Lord.

ALL

Thanks be to God.

CHORUS

When?

MARK

Hmph... Can you believe after all that time, they still asked... "When?"

LUKE

Well done, Mark! It's been a good year for you!

MARK

Oh? Luke... what are you doing here?

LUKE

Well, I'm here to see you off. It's Christ the King next week, but John gets to do that one... This is your last Gospel of the year... we won't be hearing from you for quite some time.

MARK

Hmph. I suppose not.

LUKE

It's quite a note to end on. (*Dramatically*) "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"!

MARK

Jesus had a way with words, Luke. And I do love getting to tell the story... "This is but the beginning of the birthpangs."

LUKE

And the end of your lectionary year, now if you wouldn't mind stepping aside...

MARK

I can't just yet... I don't suppose you could take the year off?

LUKE

Of course not, we can't have two Mark years in a row! Why do you ask?

MARK

I don't think they got it... any of it, really.

LUKE

And you think I'm not up to the task of telling it to them?

MARK

Well, I'm sure you think you are... but I may not get another chance.

LUKE

Give it a rest. We read you again in two more years...

MARK

And how do I know we have that long?

(Pause.)

LUKE

How do you mean?

MARK

We might just “see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory...”

CHORUS

When?

LUKE

Soon? This year... the next? When?

MARK

Would you believe me if I said... now?

LUKE

Don't joke... when?

MARK

A loaded question... especially when you're asking someone who knows the answer.

LUKE

You know the day? Did he tell you?

MARK

About that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father... so why are you asking me?

LUKE

You said you knew the answer!

MARK

I do, but it's no secret. It was my first lesson this year. Here it is, in the same chapter! A reading from Mark the 13th Chapter:

Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.

The Word of the Lord.

LUKE, CHORUS, ALL

Thanks be to God...

CHORUS

When?

LUKE

Fine, you got in an extra reading... You still haven't answered my question. Can you just finish up here?

MARK

No! Not until they get this one... this was my lesson for first advent.

LUKE

I recall, last November.

MARK

Yes. It was the season of waiting and they were all ears... But then Christmas rolled around and there was nothing to wait for...

LUKE
(*skeptically*)

Is that why you left Christmas out of your Gospel?

MARK

Hear me out! By the time we hit Lent they knew it was going to be Easter soon, sure enough the happy day came right on schedule.

CHORUS

Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

MARK

They don't think they have to wait for anything. Sunday will come right after Saturday, just like it does every week.

LUKE

So you think they aren't waiting. Is that your point?

MARK

Exactly my point. Though, they don't get the full *weight* of it... The master could return at ANY time...

CHORUS

When?

CHORUS 1

On a Wednesday?

CHORUS 2

During dinner?

CHORUS 3

While I'm brushing my teeth?

MARK

Not only that, but in the evening...

CHORUS 1

When it was evening he came with the twelve...

CHORUS 2

When they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "One of you will betray me."

CHORUS 3

Surely, not I...

CHORUS 4

Surely, not I...

CHORUS 1

They went to a place called Gethsemane...

I am deeply grieved, even to death. Remain here, and keep awake...

CHORUS 2

He returned and found them...

CHORUS 3

Sleeping.

CHORUS 1

Simon... are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?

CHORUS 1, 2, 4

KEEP AWAKE...

CHORUS 1

And pray that you may not come into the time of trial.

CHORUS

But he came again, and we were asleep again... we could not find words to say we were sorry...

MARK

Or at midnight...

CHORUS 2

Ten foolish virgins...

CHORUS 4

As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout,

CHORUS 3

“Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.”

MATT

Hey, that’s from my Gospel!

MARK

Sorry, Matt... but it does fit.

MATT

Hmph.

MARK

Or at cockcrow.

CHORUS 3

I do not know him...

CHORUS 1

Aren’t you one of his...

CHORUS 3

No...

CHORUS 4

But you are Galilean, surely I've seen...

CHORUS 3

By heaven and hell, I do not know this man you are talking about!

CHORUS 2

(crowing) Cock-a-doodle-dooooooooo!

(Peter falls.)

MARK

Or at dawn...

CHORUS 2-4

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

CHORUS 1

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him.

LUKE

Enough! Your point is made... all of them failed at various times and places... this is why the question of the disciples is so important... you must tell us... *When will this be?*

CHORUS 1, 2, 4

WHEN?

CHORUS 3

The time has always been now... our question of when was the least important...

CHORUS

Keep Awake...

CHORUS 3

The master has left us each to our work, so we must be about our work now...

CHORUS 1

Preaching now...

CHORUS 2

Praying now...

CHORUS 3

Serving now...

MARK

Waiting now...

CHORUS 3

Waiting, but alive with the Spirit... active in this time and place.

LUKE

(to Mark)

But what about you? You said you knew the answer...

MARK

The answer has nothing to do with the day or the hour... the answer is the command of the master. The first and last lesson of the church year... And I say to you what I say to all...

MARK and CHORUS

KEEP AWAKE!

END